

Vermont Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System

Strategic Plan and Performance Measures

Data collected as part of Vermont's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) program is an integral part of the Vermont Department of Health's work and is widely used throughout the department. Each of the department's chronic disease and risk factor programs uses BRFSS data for program planning and surveillance efforts. BRFSS data is also a primary source of data for the Healthy Vermonters 2020 initiative with 34 of the population indicators measured using BRFSS data. The BRFSS program regularly seeks other avenues for the data's use, both within the Health Department and its partners, including other departments within the Agency of Human Services, other Vermont agencies, those in clinical practice, and partners in health system reform.

Following is the Vermont BRFSS program's strategic plan for 2015 – 2020. This plan is aligned with the goals and strategic directions of the Vermont Department of Health (VDH) and Division of Health Surveillance (HS) strategic plans. Performance measures are listed under each strategic direction. These will be used in assessing accomplishment of the overall strategic plan.

VDH Goal 1: Effective and integrated public health programs

HS Strategic Direction 1.1: Increase integration within the Health Department and with other governmental programs

- i. The BRFSS program will provide data for Health Department performance management system components, including the Healthy Vermonters 2020 toolkit and performance scorecards that incorporate BRFSS data.
 - a. Performance Measure: To allow for planning to complete updates, provide appropriate Health Department staff notification of the approximate BRFSS data release date at least one month prior to that date.
 - b. Performance Measure: 90% of indicators measured via BRFSS (n=34) will be updated in the performance management system within 60 days of publishing the annual report.
- ii. The BRFSS Data Users Group, which annually reviews and recommends questions for the BRFSS survey, will include representatives from all divisions in the Health Department.
 - a. Performance Measure: Annually, send notices for the meetings to review proposed survey questions at least two months in advance of the first meeting.
 - b. Performance Measure: Data Users Group meeting minutes will demonstrate 75% of divisions attending all meetings.
- iii. The BRFSS program will work to strengthen partnerships throughout the Vermont Agency of Human Services to encourage the use of BRFSS data in planning efforts.
 - a. Performance Measure: BRFSS Program will implement one new outreach effort to AHS departments per year for the next five years.
 - b. Performance Measure: Partners demonstrate their interest by using existing data in their reports and decision and/or provide funding for new questions.

HS Strategic Direction 1.2: Prepare for and respond to emerging health threats

- i. The BRFSS program's long-term plan will regularly be reviewed and updated to incorporate emerging and changing threats over time.
 - a. Performance Measure: Create and maintain a list of the "emerging and changing threats" based on feedback from Health Department program managers and leadership at least once every three (3) years. Incorporate these topics into the BRFSS long-term plan on a rotating basis.
 - b. Performance Measure: Review and update long-term plan by June 30th annually.

VDH Goal 2: Communities with the capacity to respond to public health needs

HS Strategic Direction 2.1: Maintain high quality working relationships with key partners

- i. The BRFSS program coordinator will strengthen collaborative relationships with VDH programs and divisions.
 - a. Performance Measure: 80% of Research, Epidemiology, and Evaluation Unit reports containing BRFSS data will be distributed using the program's internal listserv.
 - b. Performance Measure: Solicit topics for data briefs from Health Department programs and develop schedule for completion. Review and update schedule annually.
- ii. The Data Users Group will be a venue for sharing ideas and analyses, promoting innovation, and generally building relationships among BRFSS and other program staff.
 - a. Performance Measure: Data Users Group meetings will be held at least once quarterly.

HS Strategic Direction 2.2: Increase data capability and use among critical partners

- i. The BRFSS Program Coordinator will provide support as needed to Public Health Statistics efforts to work with the Office of Local Health to identify "data experts" in each DO and develop a training plan to assist in increased data proficiency.
 - a. Performance Measure: BRFSS Coordinator will meet monthly with the Public Health Infrastructure analyst to help assess needs and provide support as they work to increase data capacity in each DO.
- ii. The BRFSS Program Coordinator will train new BRFSS data analysts and be available to provide assistance to all users on an as needed basis.
 - a. Performance Measure: All BRFSS data analysts will be proficient in using the data within two months of their hire.
- iii. BRFSS Program staff will seek opportunities to share BRFSS data published on the Health Department's website, including reports and various measures that are available via the Instant Atlas tool.

- a. Performance Measure: All BRFSS program staff will demonstrate and provide documentation of use or discussion of data with internal or external partners as well as dissemination of publications using BRFSS data.
 - b. Performance Measure: Provide a list of BRFSS program reports expected to be created and released to the Research, Epidemiology, and Evaluation Unit Supervisor by January 15th of each year. The list will be incorporated into the Public Health Statistics Section's overall planned publications list for the calendar year.
- iv. BRFSS Program staff will increase their understanding of options and opportunities for comparing BRFSS data with clinical data to improve programs and policies.
 - a. Performance Measure: Provide a list of recommendations for how to compare BRFSS data to clinical data, including strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities, to the Public Health Statistics Chief and the Health Surveillance Division Director, by November 1, 2015. Any recommendations or proposals shall include examples of similar analytics being utilized by other states.

VDH Goal 3: Internal systems that provide consistent and responsive support

HS Strategic Direction 3.1: Develop systems to regularly update and disseminate accurate and timely data to end users

- i. The BRFSS program will annually collect quality data from a representative sample of Vermont adults.
 - a. Performance Measure: Meet annual targets for completed interviews on both the land line and cell phone samples.
 - b. Performance Measure: Complaints and inquiries about the BRFSS will receive a verbal or written response from a designated member of the BRFSS program staff within 24 hours of receipt of the information.
 - c. Performance Measure: Archive data that is ten (10) years or older in a format that can be accessed and utilized by today's standard analytical software. This includes conducting an annual review of any datasets that need conversion and doing so within 45 days of the annual review.
 - d. Performance Measure: Review the procedures and mechanisms used to protect an individually-identifiable data from unauthorized disclosure and send a memo on an annual basis to the Public Health Statistics Chief identifying any potential threats to confidentiality and options to address the deficiencies.
 - e. Conduct an annual review of access permissions to server folders and email groups that may contain confidential BRFSS data. Notify the appropriate HelpDesk IT staff of any erroneous access and confirm in writing that access has been removed.

- ii. BRFSS program reports will be created and updated regularly and in a timely manner upon the annual release of data.
 - a. Performance Measure: Annual report will be published within 12 weeks of finalizing the dataset.
 - b. Performance Measure: Develop an annual schedule and mode for release of the BRFSS program reports. Review and update this schedule by June 30th of each year.
 - c. Performance Measure: Retain all products and documentation according to Federal and State records disposition laws and policies.
- iii. With the annual release of data, the BRFSS program will regularly and in a timely manner update all measures available on the Health Department's website via the Instant Atlas tool.
 - a. Performance Measure: All HV2020 measures measured with BRFSS data will be updated within 12 weeks of a data release.
- iv. BRFSS program staff will utilize revised system for tracking and streamlining requests for data.
 - a. Performance Measure: Acknowledge all requests for BRFSS data in verbal or written format within 24 hours of receipt of the request. Complete the majority of requests with 48 hours, and for those that cannot be completed within that time frame (e.g. high complexity or large number of data items) develop time table for delivery in collaboration with the requestor.
- v. BRFSS program staff will actively participate in Public Health Statistics section efforts to develop and update a document describing the strengths, limitations, current and potential uses of Health Department data.
 - a. Ensure that the description of BRFSS in the "data encyclopedia" is accurate and up to date.

HS Strategic Direction 3.2: Align internal structures and systems to provide consistent, responsive support, and ensure accountability

- i. The BRFSS data collection contract will include performance-based provisions and support the Agency and Department performance monitoring efforts each year.
 - a. Performance Measure: BRFSS Coordinator will review performance-based provisions in the data collection contract quarterly and take action as appropriate.
- ii. See HS Strategic Direction 3.1.4

VDH Goal 4: A competent and valued workforce that is supported in promoting and protecting the public's health

HS Strategic Direction 4.1: Engage staff in exploring new areas of interest and innovative practice

- i. BRFSS Program: At least one member of the BRFSS program will participate in CDC BRFSS Program trainings and conferences. These regularly include information about innovative practice in the form of survey methodology and analytics.
 - a. Performance Measure: Upon receipt of new information about methodology or analytics, share, within 45 day of receipt, with other analytical staff in the Health Department and users of the BRFSS (BRFSS Data Users Group).
 - b. Performance Measure: Convene a group of analysts and data users from across the Health Department to discuss any significant changes to methodology or analytics (e.g., weighting methods) before implementation.
 - c. Performance Measure: Compare the BRFSS survey sampling and analytical methodologies every three (3) years to those used by other analysts and programs within the Health Department and utilize/promote common methodologies whenever feasible and allowable by the data and funding sources.

VDH Goal 5: A public health system that is understood and valued by Vermonters

HS Strategic Direction 5.1: Provide consistent public health communication internally and externally

- i. All reports produced by the BRFSS program will utilize available Public Health Statistics templates to create consistency, easy recognition and clear messaging.
 - a. Performance Measure: All web-published BRFSS reports will include a VDH logo, date published, and contact information.
- ii. BRFSS program staff will support multiple users of data through providing appropriate data and data training.
 - a. Performance Measure: Create complete documentation (file description, record layout, variable definition, etc.) for all public use data files and post on the Health Department's website at the same time as release of the data files.
 - b. Performance Measure: Create and maintain complete documentation for all reports, analyses, contracts, and survey and/or analysis methodologies, and make available on a shared internal folder on the server within 30 days of the completed item.

HS Strategic Direction 5.2: Publicize public health policy and program outcomes and successes

- i. BRFSS program coordinator will develop and implement a BRFSS data analysis dissemination plan.
 - a. Performance Measure: Prepare an announcement or short summary of an important analysis and insight that utilized BRFSS data for the Public Health

Statistics Chief at least once each month for inclusion in the weekly Governor's Report.

VDH Goal 6: Healthy equity for all Vermonters

HS Strategic Direction 5.3: Recognize and respond to health disparities

- i. BRFSS analysts will work to ensure potential disparities are included when developing research questions and analyzing data.
 - a. Performance Measure: Identify and create a list of disparities that will be addressed in the development of surveys and analyses, and obtain feedback regarding the list every three (3) years from Health Department program managers and key external stakeholders.
- ii. BRFSS program staff will use the identified Public Health Statistics proxy measure for “socio-economic status” in analyses to identify population at risk.
 - a. Performance Measure: Review the proxy measure for “socio-economic status” every three (3) years to ensure that the model is still appropriate for purposes of measuring Vermont population at risk. Proposed changes to the model will be submitted as a memo to the Public Health Statistics Chief